

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
CONGRESSMAN TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 22, 2004

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**Defense Department Targeted in Diploma Mill Probe,
Per Chairmen Davis' and Collins' Request**
GAO Investigation Into Federal Fake Degree Holders Expanded

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Senate Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Susan Collins (R-ME) and House Government Reform Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) today asked the General Accounting Office (GAO) to broaden its ongoing investigation of federal diploma mill degree holders to include personnel at the Department of Defense.

In July 2003, Collins and Davis asked GAO to investigate the use of diploma mill degrees to obtain positions and promotions within the federal government and whether those degrees were paid for with federal funds. News reports and work previously conducted by the GAO suggests that this practice might be a significant problem.

“We agreed that the GAO’s initial investigation would focus on the Departments of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, Energy, Transportation, Education, Veterans Affairs, the Office of Personnel Management and the Small Business Administration,” wrote Collins and Davis in their letter to the GAO. “We are now asking the GAO to examine diploma mill degree use and reimbursement at the Department of Defense in order to get a more complete picture of the extent of the problem.”

Diploma mills masquerade as legitimate institutions of higher learning, but the degrees they offer are awarded for a fee, not on the basis of meaningful coursework and academic achievement.

“No contender for a job—whether it’s in the private sector or federal government—should lose out to a candidate because that candidate holds a bogus degree,” said Collins. “And our tax dollars should not be spent on helping federal workers obtain fake degrees. In the long run, this GAO investigation will ensure that our tax dollars are spent wisely and will help employees advance their careers—legitimately.”

“We continue to be very concerned about federal employees buying bogus degrees to enhance their resumes,” Davis said. “By adding the Department of Defense to the investigation,

we expect to give Congress and the administration a more comprehensive view of the problem in some of the most critical areas of national security. Weeding out employees with bogus credentials—whether or not they resulted in an actual promotion—will boost morale and rectify a terrible breach of trust.”

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